

## **Ethics Division – U.S. Department of Commerce ([www.ogc.doc.gov/ethics.html](http://www.ogc.doc.gov/ethics.html))**

The Ethics Division staff of the Office of the Assistant General Counsel for Administration is responsible for providing advice to Department of Commerce employees regarding conflict of interest statutes, ethics regulations, and related laws, including those concerning restrictions on engaging in some political activities and on gifts to the Department and to Commerce agencies. To ensure that advisory services are readily available, an attorney is assigned each day to answer telephone questions (phone 202-482-5384) and e-mail inquiries to the Ethics Division ([ethicsdivision@doc.gov](mailto:ethicsdivision@doc.gov)).

The Division is also responsible for operating the Department's financial disclosure program, through which reports are collected from employees and reviewed to identify potential conflicts of interest, and ethics training program, under which briefings are provided to employees on ethics statutes, regulations, and policies.

### **Statutes and Regulations**

Department of Commerce employees are subject to conflict of interest statutes, 18 U.S.C. §§ 201-203, 205, 207-209, and the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch, 5 C.F.R. Part 2635. Subjects covered by these rules include financial conflicts of interest, appearance problems created by personal relationships, gifts, non-Federal employment and outside activities, misuse of Government resources, and post-employment restrictions. Employees are also subject to a statute, the Hatch Act, regarding restrictions on engaging in certain political activities.

## **FEDERAL POLICY ON RESEARCH MISCONDUCT**

The Office of Science and Technology Policy ([www.ostp.gov/html/001207\\_3.html](http://www.ostp.gov/html/001207_3.html)) in the Executive Office of the President has defined misconduct in research and science as *fabrication* (making up data or results and recording or reporting them), *falsification* (manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting), and *plagiarism* (using another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit). Depending upon the severity of the alleged offense, actions against the employee can include everything from a supervisory reprimand to investigation by the Office of the Inspector General.